

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-07 OES-07
SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-15 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PA-02
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R 271526Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7587
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 10177

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MNUC, PARM, SF
SUB: VISIT OF AMB. SMITH TO SOUTH AFRICA

REF: STATE 155117

1. UNDER HEADLINE QUOTE SOUTH AFRICA SEEKS PLEDGE ON
U.S. NUCLEAR PACKAGE UNQUOTE, THE FINANCIAL TIMES FRONT-
PAGED TODAY A STORY BY DAVID FISHLOCK, SCIENCE EDITOR,
THAT REPORTS SMITH AGENDA IN SOME DETAIL. FULL TEXT
FOLLOWS:

2. QUOTE: SOUTH AFRICA HAS ASKED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
FOR FIRM GUARANTEES FOR A CONTROVERSIAL PACKAGE OF
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NUCLEAR FUEL SERVICES IN EXCHANGE FOR SIGNING THE
NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY.

THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S LATEST PROPOSALS WERE
TAKEN TO PRETORIA RECENTLY BY MR. GERARD SMITH, A
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL.

THE PACKAGE STIPULATED BY THE SOUTH AFRICANS INCLUDES
THE ENRICHMENT OF URANIUM FOR ITS FIRST TWO NUCLEAR

POWER REACTORS - UNDER CONSTRUCTION NEAR CAPE TOWN - FURTHER SUPPLIES OF URANIUM FUEL FOR ITS SAFARI RESEARCH REACTOR, AND AN ASSURANCE OF WHAT IT CALLS "NON-SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY" FOR ITS NEW URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT AT VALINDABA.

IN RETURN, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS INDICATED ITS WILLINGNESS EITHER TO SIGN THE TREATY OR TO ACCEPT "FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS" - WHICH FROM THE STANDPOINT OF U.S. NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY MAY BE JUST AS ACCEPTABLE.

FOR THE U.S. THE BIG RISK OF FAILURE TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE IS THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT MAY BE FORCED INTO AN ACCELERATED PROGRAMME OF DEVELOPING ITS OWN URANIUM ENRICHMENT CAPACITY.

THE REWARD OF SUCCESS, HOWEVER, COULD BE THAT OTHER NUCLEAR NATIONS SUCH AS INDIA, PAKISTAN, BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA, ARE PERSUADED TO SIGN THE TREATY.

THE PACKAGE IS DIPLOMATICALLY MOST SENSITIVE IN THE AREA OF FUEL FOR THE SMALL (20 MW OF HEAT) SAFARI RESEARCH REACTOR, FOR WHICH THE LAST U.S. DELIVERIES WERE AUTHORISED AT THE END OF 1976.

THIS IS NORMALLY OF 93 PER CENT ENRICHMENT - THAT IS, OF A LEVEL ASSOCIATED WITH NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES.

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HAS BEEN INVESTIGATING WAYS IN WHICH THE RELATIVELY FEW RESEARCH REACTORS WHICH REQUIRE THESE VERY HIGH LEVELS OF ENRICHMENT MIGHT BE ADAPTED TO USE LOWER LEVELS.

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THE AIM IS THAT SUCH REACTORS SHOULD USE FUEL NO MORE HIGHLY ENRICHED THAN 20 PER CENT, AT WHICH LEVEL, IT IS JUDGED, ANY WEAPON FASHIONED FROM THE FUEL WOULD BE SO CUMBERSOME AS TO BE DISCOUNTABLE.

IN THE CASE OF SAFARI, HOWEVER, THE U.S. SCIENTISTS CAN DO NO BETTER THAN TO PROPOSE A FUEL OF 35-40 PER

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CENT ENRICHMENT.

THIS DISADVANTAGE MAY BE USED BY THE SOUTH AFRICANS
TO ADVANCE THEIR CASE FOR TWO OTHER PARTS OF THE PACKAGE,
NAMELY GUARANTEED SUPPLIES FOR ENRICHMENT FOR THE
KOEBERG POWER REACTORS, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM
OVERSEAS FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT.

THE COMMERCIAL ENRICHMENT PLANT, CONFIRMED IN
JANUARY, WILL BE SOUTH AFRICA'S ONLY POSSIBLE MEANS OF
FUELING KOEBERG UNLESS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FULFILLS THE
ORDER IT HAS ALREADY ACCEPTED FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN
ELECTRICITY SUPPLY BOARD.

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SOUTH AFRICA HAS FREQUENTLY PROMISED THAT THIS
ENRICHMENT PLANT, WHEN BUILT, WILL BE OPEN TO INTERNA-
TIONAL INSPECTION.

HOWEVER, IT HAS RECENTLY INDICATED TO THE U.S. THAT
IT WANTS THE TECHNOLOGY TO BE KEPT SECRET, CITING AS
AN EXAMPLE OF THE SPECIAL TREATMENT IT EXPECTS THE
CURRENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN URENCO - THE ANGLO-GERMAN-
DUTCH ENRICHMENT COMPANY - AND THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR
ENERGY AGENCY ABOUT THE PRESERVATION OF COMMERCIAL
SECRECY UNQUOTE.

3. WITH RESPECT TO REFTTEL, WAS THERE A PUBLIC STATE-
MENT AT CONCLUSION OF SMITH TALKS?

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